

Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Nursing Education to Improve Population Health

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Topic: Academic Nursing: Excellence & Innovation

Category: Quality Improvement/Evidence-Based Practice Project

Abstract

Background/Introduction

Population health encompasses direct measures to address health equity and health disparities. Health outcomes of a population are directly influenced by social determinants of health (SDoH). Nurses are in a pivotal position to impact health outcomes by addressing the SDoH within patient populations. The literature identified there is a lack of consistent messaging on SDoH in health education and the need for integration of SDoH into health professional curricula including nursing curricula (Healthy People, 2020; NAM, 2016; NLN, 2019; RWJF, 2019; Thornton & Persaud, 2018; WHO, 2016). To have a greater impact on health outcomes, nursing programs need to include early educational experiences related to the SDoH for the nursing students.

Purpose

The purpose of this quality improvement project was to integrate the social determinants of health (SDoH) content at the beginning of a pre-licensure nursing curricula which includes identification of appropriate learning outcomes and teaching strategies related to SDoH.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

Qualitative approach with unstructured interviews and observation with nursing faculty gathering themes/patterns for willingness to incorporate SDoH content and teaching strategies. Developed student learning outcomes (SLO) specific to SDoH addressing access to healthy foods, transportation, assessment of neighborhoods and home environments and resources for skills development. The SLOs were mapped to the current curriculum matrix.

Results

SLO's specific to SDoH were written and mapped to the curriculum matrix, connected with a concept and an exemplar. These were presented to the leadership and faculty. These revisions were incorporated into the curricular revisions for the following academic year. In addition, themes and patterns from faculty interviews illustrate the support for such changes in nursing curriculum.

Limitations

Limitations of the concepts/exemplars currently identified in the curriculum matrix.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

Recommendations provided to the nursing educators and leadership team to address SDoH within the nursing curriculum. These recommendations will strengthen the graduating nurses' skills related to addressing SDoH.

Biography

Dr. Emilie Burdette is an Assistant Professor/Program Director for the MIDAS program (accelerated second degree nursing) at Xavier University. As a nurse for three decades, she has held positions in practice, education and leadership. Her clinical experience includes adult medical-surgical, community home health, care coordination and case management. As a nurse educator, her experience includes teaching didactic and clinical experiences. She has been involved in major curricular revisions and participated in program committees such as curriculum, test construction/analysis and evaluation. She has been directly involved in the accreditation process for various organizations. She is a member of Sigma Theta Tau.

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